

## 2071.0 - Reflecting a Nation: Stories from the 2011 Census, 2012–2013

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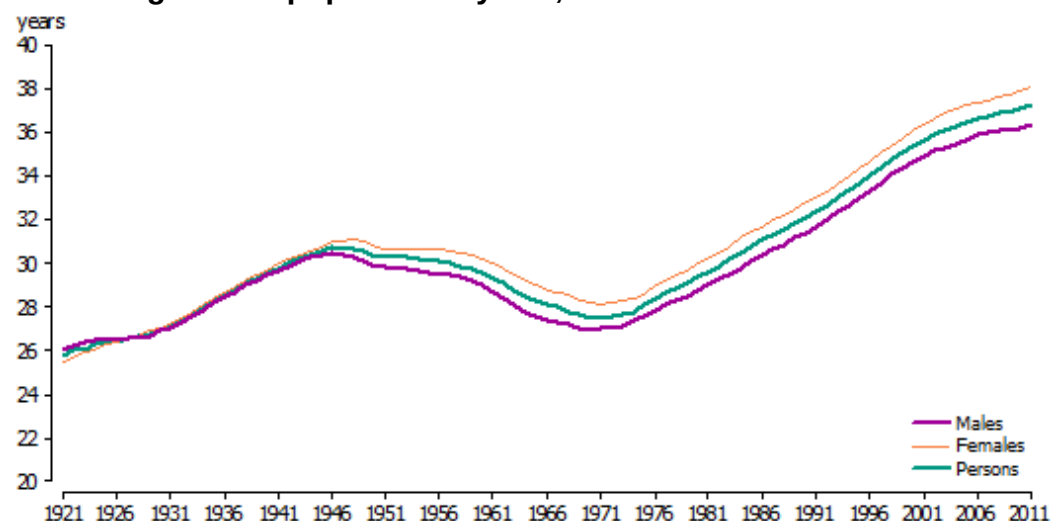
This document was added or updated on 30/10/2012.



The Australian population is ageing as a result of increasing life expectancy and sustained low fertility following the post-war baby boom. Population ageing has been an issue that has strongly influenced a range of social policies for over twenty years. It has led to compulsory superannuation for wage and salary earners, and progressive removal of barriers to continued employment, such as a fixed retirement age and economic disincentives. The demand for aged care has been increasing at the same time as the market economy has been calling on the skills of women, who had customarily been major providers of unpaid care in their households and extended families. In response, more of this care is moving into the market sector, with increasing numbers of trained aged and child care service providers.

Population ageing had been increasing steadily since the early 1970s, continuing through to 2011. This trend was only interrupted during the period 2007 to 2008, when the median age for males fell slightly and did not increase for females, a period corresponding with a spike in the birth rate. The post-war Baby Boomers are now beginning to enter the older age group (65 years and over) and will continue to increase its relative size.

### Median age of the population by sex, 1921–2011



Source: ABS, 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001

ABS, 2011, Australian Demographic Statistics, cat. no. 3101.0, Mar 2012.

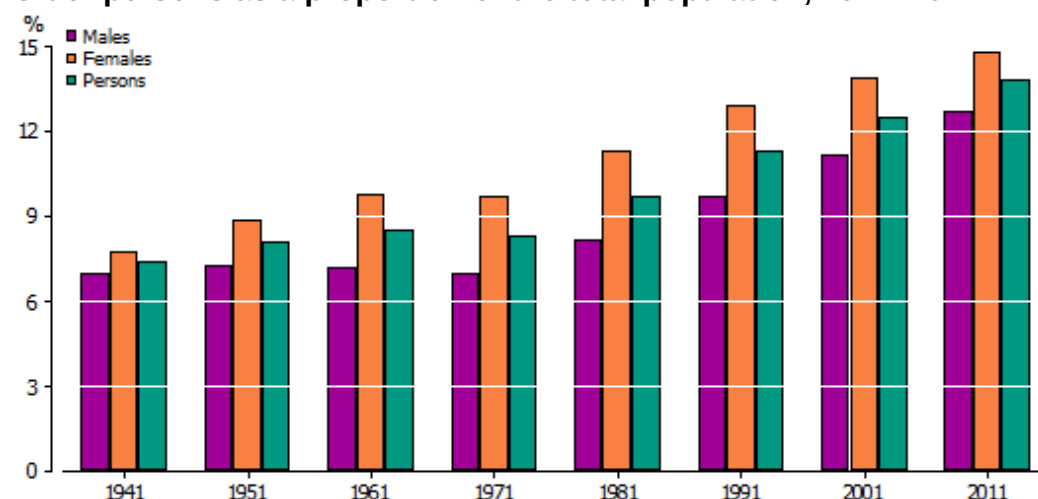
An ageing population has implications for public policy and the economy in a wide range of areas. For older people, these include health, housing, income security, residential services and opportunities for social, cultural and economic participation (including labour force). The traditional income tax base supporting social security is also shrinking relative to the potential demands of an ageing society. Young people remain longer in education before they take on full-time jobs in an economy increasingly based on knowledge and skills, and older people may often experience difficulty in finding employment (Endnote 1). For all Australia's people to have security into the future, increased productivity will be required, affecting the whole economy and society: investment in research, development and national infrastructure; support for all people to develop to their potential, to ensure their good health and economic capacity; and a greater concentration on preventive health and continuing education at all ages, to lower the burden of health care costs and encourage people of all ages to function more effectively (Endnote 2).

This story, however, focuses on Australia's older people – those aged 65 years and over. Information on population change over time is drawn mainly from ABS Estimated Resident Population data, while for broader characteristics information from the 2011 and earlier Censuses of Population and Housing is used. An overview of our ageing society will provide a setting for a series of questions: Who are Older Australians? How do they live? And where? The first question is the topic for this article.

## AUSTRALIA'S CHANGING POPULATION

In 1901, older people constituted 4.0% of Australia's population. This proportion increased to 6.4% in 1921, 7.4% in 1941 and 8.5% in 1961, before slowly declining to 8.3% in 1971. Between 1971 and 2011, the proportion of Australia's population aged 65 years and over increased to 14%. For those aged 85 years and over it more than tripled, from 0.5% to 1.8%. In 2011, women aged 65 years and over formed 15% of the total population of women, while older men constituted a smaller proportion of all men, 13%.

### Older persons as a proportion of the total population, 1941–2011

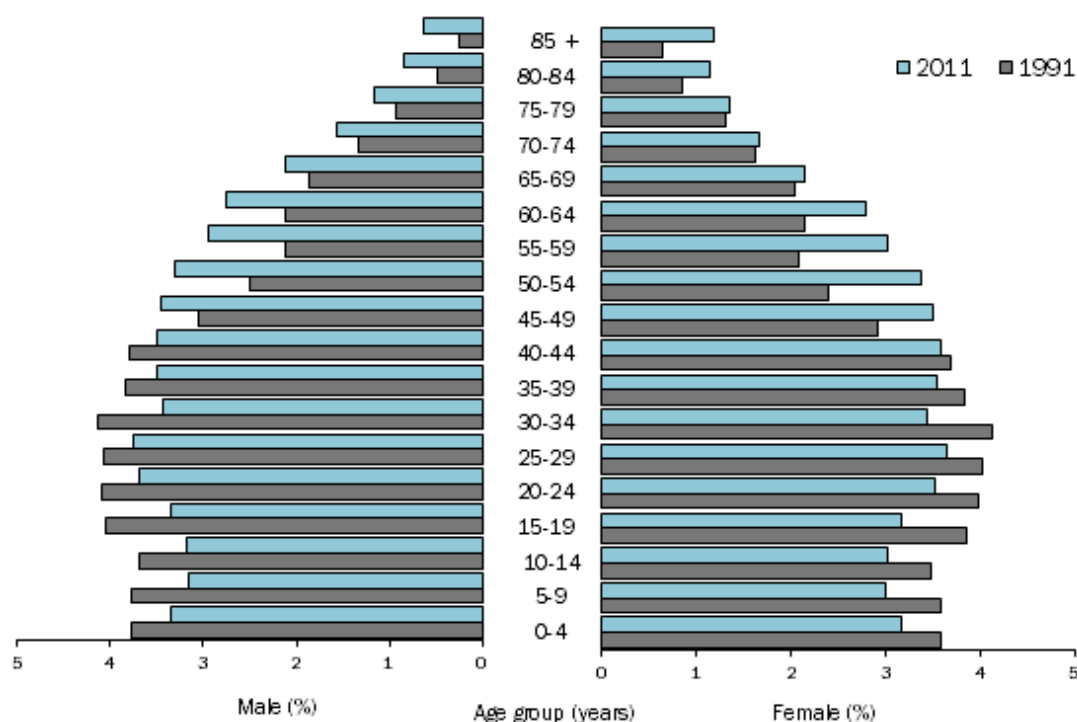


Source: ABS, 2012, Australian Demographic Statistics, cat. no. 3101.0, March 2012  
 ABS, 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001

The population pyramid below shows the age and sex structure of the Australian population in 1991 and 2011. A clear change is shown between the 40–44 years and the 45–49 years age groups. Each of the younger age groups below 45 years form a smaller proportion of the population in 2011 than in 1991, for both males and females. This is particularly apparent for children. This pattern reverses for each of the age groups from 45–49 years. However, the relationship between the sexes is often not symmetrical, markedly so for the age groups over 75

years.

## Population structure, age and sex, 1991 and 2011



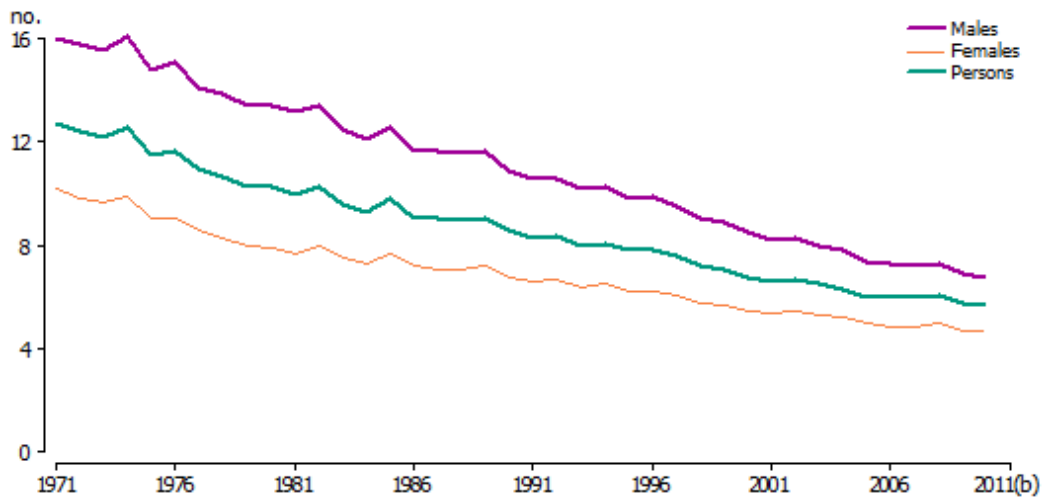
Source(s): Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008 (cat. no. 3105.0.65.001) and Australian Demographic Statistics, June 2012 (cat. no. 3101.0).

The 65–69 years age group is on a cusp between two of the major influences on population ageing, increasing life expectancy and the ageing of the Baby Boomers. Increasing life expectancy, due to declining death rates over the last twenty years for both males and females in most age groups (Endnote 3), is having its effect on numbers in all the older age groups. The proportional effect of this is greatest on the two oldest age groups, 80–84 years and 85 years and over. Beginning from a low base, these age groups have respectively increased their proportion of the older population by 22% and 66% since 1991, and by 29% and 114% since 1971.

The first year of the Baby Boom cohort (people born in 1946) entered the 65–69 age group in 2011. Baby Boomers will entirely constitute the 65–69 group for the 2016 Census and will contribute to a larger aged population in the years to come. For more information on the Baby Boom see: 100 Years of Australian Lives - Population.

Notable in the history of older people in Australia is the difference in the experiences of men and women, beginning with their representation in the population. Women outnumber men substantially in the aged population, forming 54% of all aged 65 years and over, and 66% of those in the 85 years and over group. Life tables back to the 1880s (Endnote 3) indicate a higher life expectancy for women, although prior to 1933, because there were fewer women in the whole population, there were fewer older women than older men. Since then, women have been more prevalent in older age groups. However, from 1981 the gap between the number of males and females has been reducing in most 5–year age groups, and since 1986 in the oldest age group, 85 years and over. This is reflected in the greater recent decline in the standardised death rates for men than for women, although men's death rates still remain higher.

## Standardised death rates, 1971-2010(a)



(a) Deaths per 1,000 standard population. For 1971 to 2008, the standard population is the 2001 Australian estimated resident population (ERP). For 2009 to 2010, it has been calculated using the preliminary 30 June 2010 estimated resident population.

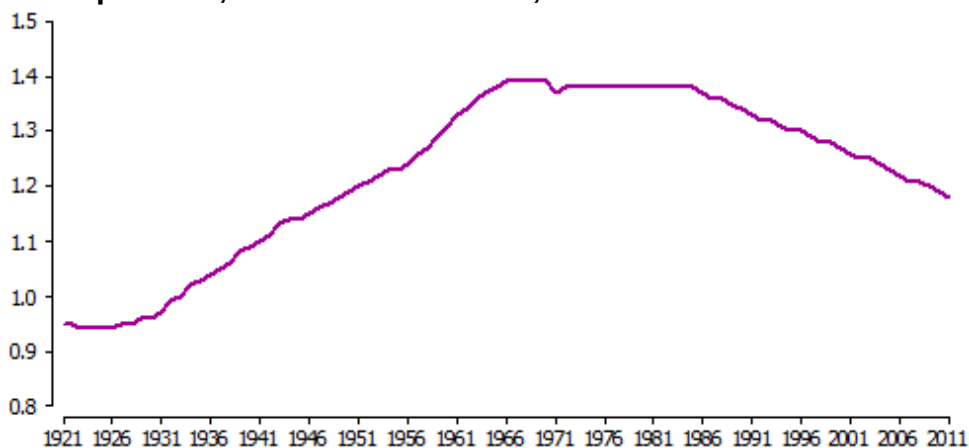
(b) The 2011 standardised death rate will be released in early November 2012 in Deaths, Australia, 2011 (cat. no. 3302.0). This publication will include re-based population figures from the 2011 Census which may affect earlier standardised death rates.

Source: ABS, 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001

ABS, 2010, Deaths Australia, cat. no. 3302.0

Over the years, for each of the 5-year age groups in the older population, the ratio of women to men peaks at a particular time, and then declines. A progressive pattern of peaking and decline strongly suggests a cohort effect working through. The peaking effect appears to begin with the 65–69 age group in 1961. The birth period for the age group at each peak point lies between 1892 and 1901. These people, therefore, were aged between 14 and 22 years in 1914. Loss of life among young men during the First World War has always had an effect on the sex ratios in these cohorts. However, the ratio was closer to parity when those in the 1892–1896 cohort were aged 65–69 years in 1961, then increased strongly with ageing, reaching a level of 2.6 or more when they were in the combined 85 years and over groups for the years 1979 to 1989. This illustrates the progressively different life outcomes for the women and men who survived this war (whether they were born in Australia, or were the German Jews, British or Italian migrants who arrived between the wars) (Endnote 4). The passing of this generation through each age group has contributed to the gradual decrease in the disproportion of the ratio between older men and women which had built up sharply to the high level of 1.36 and over between 1963 and 1988.

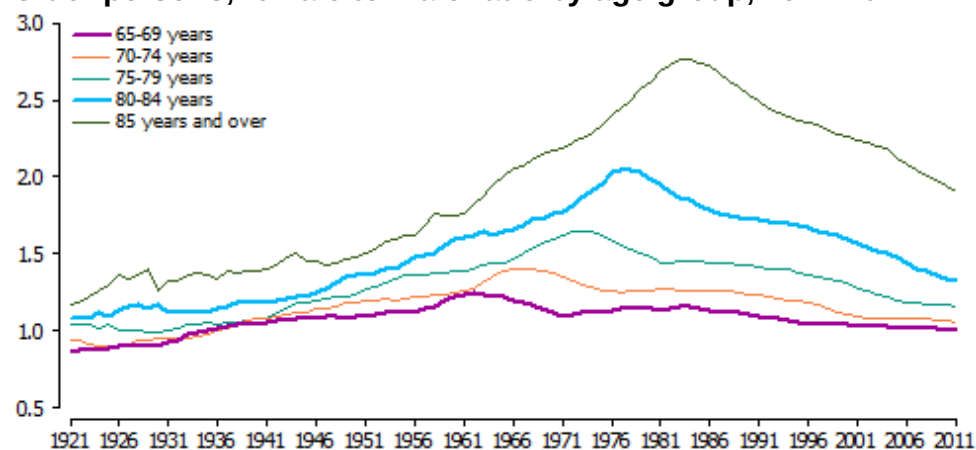
### Older persons, female to male ratio, 1921–2011



Source: ABS, 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001

ABS, 2011, Australian Demographic Statistics, cat. no. 3101.0, Sept. 2011

## Older persons, female to male ratio by age group, 1921-2011



Source: ABS, 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001  
 ABS, 2011, Australian Demographic Statistics, cat. no. 3101.0, Sept. 2011

## WHO ARE AUSTRALIA'S OLDER PEOPLE?

According to the 2011 Census, there were 3 million people aged 65 years and older resident in Australia, 1.4 million men, and 1.6 million women. Over half of this population were aged 65–74 years, 58% of the men and 51% of the women aged 65 years and over. The proportional difference between men and women increases with each age group, as shown in the 5-year age group ratio graph above.

### OLDER PERSONS, AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION, 2011

	65-69 years	70-74 years	75-79 years	80-84 years	85-89 years	90 years and over	65 years and over
	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000	'000
Males	455.4	342.7	252.9	188.2	100.8	38.4	1 378.4
Females	463.9	365.4	292.3	248.7	170.0	93.5	1 633.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>919.3</b>	<b>708.1</b>	<b>545.3</b>	<b>436.9</b>	<b>270.8</b>	<b>131.9</b>	<b>3 012.3</b>

## Registered marital status

The 2011 Census found clear differences in registered marital status. A small proportion of older people had never married (4.6%) - this was more common among men than among women. With divorce (9.8%) and separation (2.4%) there was less difference between the sexes. More than half of older people were married (57%) and a quarter were widowed (26%). The gender differences in these latter registered marital status categories were substantial, with 71% of older men being married compared with 46% of women, and 38% of older women being widowed compared with 11% of men.

The differences between men and women in relation to being married or widowed were clear from the 65–69 years age group onwards. Older men maintained a fairly stable rate of being married up to the 80–84 years age group when it began to decline down to 43% in the 90 years and over group. For older women the likelihood of being married decreased steadily across the age groups, down to 8% for those aged 90 years and over, with a corresponding increase in the rate of widowhood from 15% for those aged 65–74 years to 84% for the oldest age group. Information about their living arrangements will be presented in a future edition of this publication.

## OLDER PERSONS, REGISTERED MARITAL STATUS BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, 2011

	65-69 years	70-74 years	75-79 years	80-84 years	85-89 years	90 years and over	65 years and over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Males</b>							
Married	72.9	73.9	72.8	68.0	58.9	42.9	70.6
Separated	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.1	2.9
Divorced	12.8	10.6	8.1	5.9	4.2	3.0	9.6
Widowed	4.0	6.7	11.3	19.0	31.1	48.5	11.3
Never married	6.5	5.7	5.2	5.0	4.3	4.5	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Females</b>							
Married	62.7	57.2	46.9	32.6	19.1	8.0	46.4
Separated	3.1	2.3	1.6	1.0	0.6	0.3	1.9
Divorced	15.3	11.7	8.6	6.2	4.2	2.7	10.0
Widowed	14.8	25.2	39.5	56.7	72.3	84.5	37.9
Never married	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.8	4.4	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Australia has a very diverse population, ranging from descendants of its original inhabitants and of the largely British people of the colonial period through to people welcomed from all parts of the world seeking a safer or better life. Many of these have come in distinct waves at different times, affecting different age groups. Australia's older people, with a higher proportion born overseas, have a different profile from those aged 0–64 years.

With ageing, the cultural background and language of childhood often become a more important factor for quality of life and for a safe and supporting environment. Cultural expectations, poor English skills and the difficulty service providers face in trying to respond to these, because of the wide range of cultures and languages indicated below, may create barriers to accessing appropriate services. Even among those who have used English fluently, some have been observed to revert to their original language in advanced age (Endnote 5). Some understanding of these needs can be gained from examining cultural characteristics of the aged population.

## INDIGENOUS STATUS BY AGE GROUP, 2011

	0-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 years and over	65 years and over
	%	%	%	%	%
Non-Indigenous	97.0	99.1	99.4	99.7	99.3
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples	3.0	0.9	0.6	0.3	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples contribute 3% of Australians aged 0-64 years but only 0.7% of older people, reflecting the lower life expectancy and higher birth rates in these populations (Endnote 6). Contributing to this result is the fact that fewer than 4% of those identifying with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are in the 65 years and over age group.

In 2011, 36% of Australia's older people were not born in Australia, a substantially higher proportion than the 24% of people under 65 years who were overseas-born. Few older Australians were recent arrivals, 6% arriving in Australia after 1980. For those aged 85 years and over, being an immigrant was less common than in the 65–84 years age cohort, 32% compared with 37%. Older men were more likely than older women to have been born overseas, 38% compared with 34%.

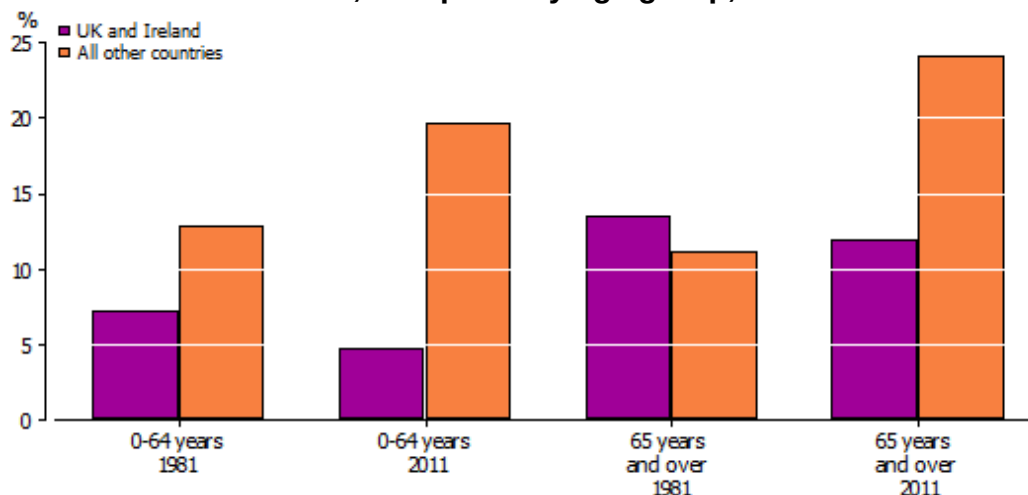
Those who were born overseas were identified as being from more than 120 different countries. There were twenty countries that were the birthplaces for 10,000 or more older persons. Over twenty countries each contributed fewer than 100 settlers to these older age groups.

### BIRTHPLACE BY AGE GROUP AND SEX, 2011

	0-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 years and over	65 years and over
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Males</b>					
Born in Australia	75.9	62.1	61.1	64.2	62.0
Born overseas	24.1	37.9	38.9	35.8	38.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Females</b>					
Born in Australia	75.2	64.5	65.8	69.6	65.7
Born overseas	24.8	35.5	34.2	30.4	34.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Persons</b>					
Born in Australia	75.5	63.3	63.7	67.7	64.0
Born overseas	24.5	36.7	36.3	32.3	36.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Among older people, the profile of birth countries differs both over time and in comparison with younger age groups, reflecting historical events. Censuses over the last thirty years illustrate these differences. Overwhelmingly, older people in 1981 were born in Australia (75%) and the UK and Ireland (13%). Following the Second World War, Australia had become home to large numbers of people displaced from their homelands, particularly from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. During the 1950s Australia was also sponsoring immigration from the United Kingdom, Italy and other European countries in order to build its population (Endnote 7).

### Persons born overseas, birthplace by age group, 1981 and 2011



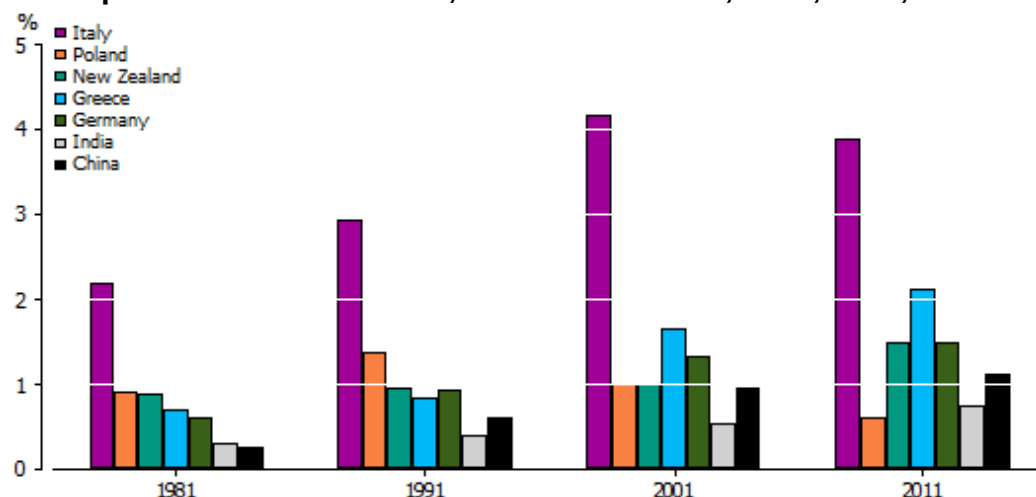


By 1981, some of these post-war European immigrants were moving into the older population. Among these, Italy was the most prominent country of birth (after the UK and Ireland) with 2.2%, followed by others with less than 1.0% – Poland, Greece, The Netherlands, Germany, the former Yugoslavia, the former USSR and Hungary. New Zealand was level with Greece, contributing 0.7% of Australia's older population. India and China were present in the leading twenty overseas birth countries, each providing around 0.3% of older people.

The censuses for 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 show a changing distribution of birth countries among older people, with a continuing decline from 75% to 64% born in Australia, and from 13% to 11% born in the United Kingdom. Greece and New Zealand progressively increased their share, as did Western European countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, and, starting from a smaller base, China and India. Italy has been the leading birthplace of overseas-born older Australians after the United Kingdom for at least the last thirty years; its numbers continued to increase from 91,900 in 2001 to 108,600 in 2011, but its proportion has lessened from 4.2% to 3.9% as a result of the growing size and diversity of Australia's older population. A wave of people from Eastern European countries such as Poland and Hungary have passed through the older population, increasing then diminishing their representation. Contrastingly, those from South-Eastern European countries such as Greece and Croatia initially increased and then maintained their representation.

In recent years the older population of Australia has come from an increasingly diverse range of countries. The diversity in the older population is likely to continue in the future as indicated in the graph below by the birthplace analysis of the 0–64 age group in 2011: they are more likely to be born in Australia (76%), many as second generation Australians; the United Kingdom and Europe are becoming much less dominant sources of immigrants, with strengthening proportions from India and Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, China, Hong Kong, South Africa, New Zealand and other countries in their regions.

**Older persons born overseas, countries of birth, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011(a)(b)**



(a) Leading countries of birth, excluding Australia and the UK.

(b) Calculated as a proportion of the total population aged 65 years and over.

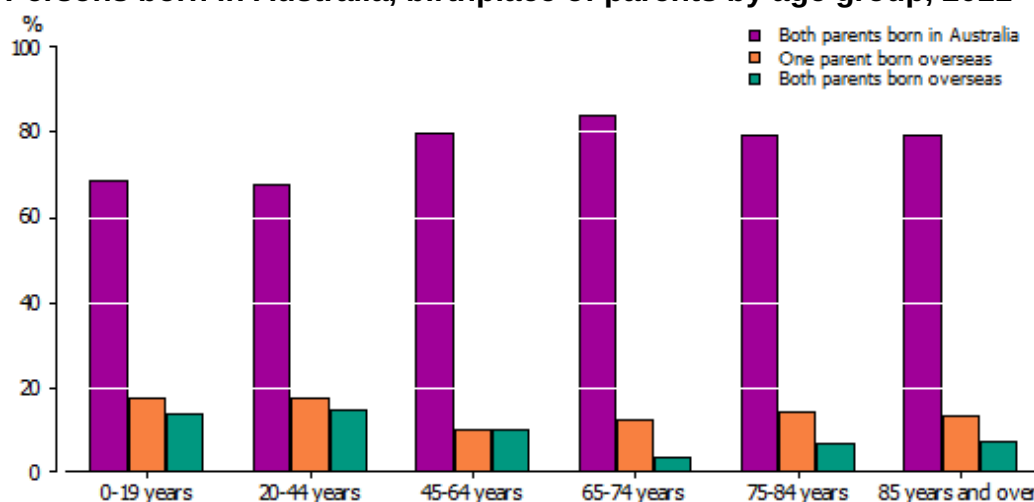
It is not only people born overseas whose lives have been shaped to some extent by the culture and language of another country. The language, values and culture of the children of first generation immigrants may be influenced in varying degrees, moderated by their experiences through education and work in Australia.

## Language



Australian-born older people in 2011 were less likely than those aged under 65 years to have a parent born overseas (18% compared with 29%) and considerably less likely to have both parents overseas-born (5.1% compared with 13.3%). Those aged 65–74 were the least likely (16%) to have immigrant parents. The vast majority (97%) of older people born in Australia who had an overseas-born parent spoke English as their main language at home. Others spoke Italian (1.4%), Greek (0.7%), South Slavic (mostly Croatian) 0.2%, Lebanese (0.1%), Chinese (0.1%) the South-East Asian languages, particularly Vietnamese (0.1%) and the South-East Austronesian languages of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines (0.1%).

**Persons born in Australia, birthplace of parents by age group, 2011**



Most older people spoke only English at home, 83%, similar for older men and older women. There were 11% who spoke another language at home, but identified as speaking English well; 12% of men responded this way, compared with 10% of women. A smaller proportion, 6% of the older population, spoke another language at home, and spoke English poorly. This group included 1.5% of all older people, who did not speak English at all. Speaking no English was more common among those aged 85 years and over, 2% of men and 3% of women. At this age, support needs are greater, and there is a need for good communication. Social interaction is very difficult otherwise, as is gaining assistance with personal needs and being able to follow advice and instructions about medications and activities, to remain safe and as comfortable as possible.

Among older Australians a very wide range of languages was spoken at home. Many of these languages are spoken by relatively small numbers of people, which often makes effective communication difficult outside the immediate family or language community (Endnote 4). The table below shows numbers of speakers for different languages or language groups (e.g. Indo-Aryan) in order of size. It does not cover all languages – there are many others with fewer than a thousand speakers.

**OLDER PERSONS, MAIN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH SPOKEN AT HOME, 2011**

Language	Count of speakers no.	Language	Count of speakers no.	Language	Count of speakers no. range for each listed language/group
Italian	111 458	Maltese	13 862	Other Southern Asian	4 000–4 999
Greek	68 856	Polish	12 121	Portuguese, Korean, Ukrainian	3 000–3 999

Chinese	48 813	Macedonian	11 664	Australian Indigenous, Slovene	2 000–2 999
German	27 182	Indo–Aryan languages	11 065	Armenian, Persian (excl. Dari)	1 950–1 999
Arabic	19 358	Russian	8 385	Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, Latvian	1 900–1 949
Croatian	17 653	French	8 283	Serbo-Croatian/Yugoslavian	1 800–1 899
Spanish	15 453	Serbian	8 273	Czech	1 700–1 799
Dutch	15 176	Hungarian	7 882	Japanese, Tai	1 400–1 599
Mon–Khmer	14 124	Turkish	4 338	Burmese, Romanian	1 100–1 399

## Religion

Another aspect of a person's culture is their religion. Most Australians (69%) and particularly older Australians (81%), identify a connection with a religion, whether practising or not, or with some form of spirituality. Older people in Australia are considerably more likely than younger Australians to report a religious affiliation: only 10% reported no religion. Their identification is mostly with Christian denominations.

In 2011, older people still had a strong attachment to Anglicanism, 27%, which attracted a much smaller proportion (16%) of those aged under 65 years. They also nominated other more traditional Protestant religions at a higher rate than younger people, for example the Uniting Church (8.6% compared with 4.4%) and the Presbyterian Church (5.5% compared with 2.3%). Western Catholicism, having been refreshed by immigration (Endnote 8), was specified more evenly by both older and younger people, 25.4% and 25.1% respectively. Among people aged 85 years and over, though, a larger proportion of whom were born in Australia or the United Kingdom, 29% said they were Anglican and 22% Catholic. A higher proportion of older people reported Orthodox Christianity, 3.6% compared with 2.7% of those aged less than 65 years, largely because of the Greek and Eastern European presence in the older population. Religious movements such as Pentecostalism were around half as likely to be reported by people aged 65 years and over.

Of other world religions, Buddhism was the most common in the older population, at 1.2%, but this is much lower than the 2.7% of the younger population. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, similarly, formed a smaller proportion of the older population, 0.5%, 0.3% and 0.1% respectively, than their respective representation among those aged under 64 years – 2.5%, 1.4% and 0.4%. Judaism, however, was a more common response among the older population groups, 0.6% compared with 0.4%.

### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION BY AGE GROUP, 2011

		0-64 years %	65 years and over %	All Persons %
Christian		58.4	78.0	61.1
	Western Catholic	25.1	25.4	25.1
	Anglican	15.5	26.7	17.1
	Uniting	4.4	8.7	5.0
	Presbyterian	2.3	5.5	2.7
	Orthodox	2.2	3.2	2.4
	Baptist	1.6	1.7	1.6
	Lutheran	1.1	1.7	1.2
	Pentecostal	1.2	0.6	1.1
	Other Christian	5.0	1.9	4.9
Buddhism		2.7	1.2	2.5
Judaism		0.4	0.6	0.5

Islam	2.5	0.5	2.2
Hinduism	1.4	0.3	1.3
Sikhism	0.4	0.1	0.3
Other religions	1.4	0.4	1.2
<b>Total religious affiliation</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>81.1</b>	<b>69.1</b>
No religion	24.3	10.2	22.3
Not stated	8.5	8.7	8.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Included in Broad Religious Affiliation are

- Christian denominations,
- Other world religions,
- Other reported forms of spiritual practice, and
- Religious ideas inadequately described for classification.

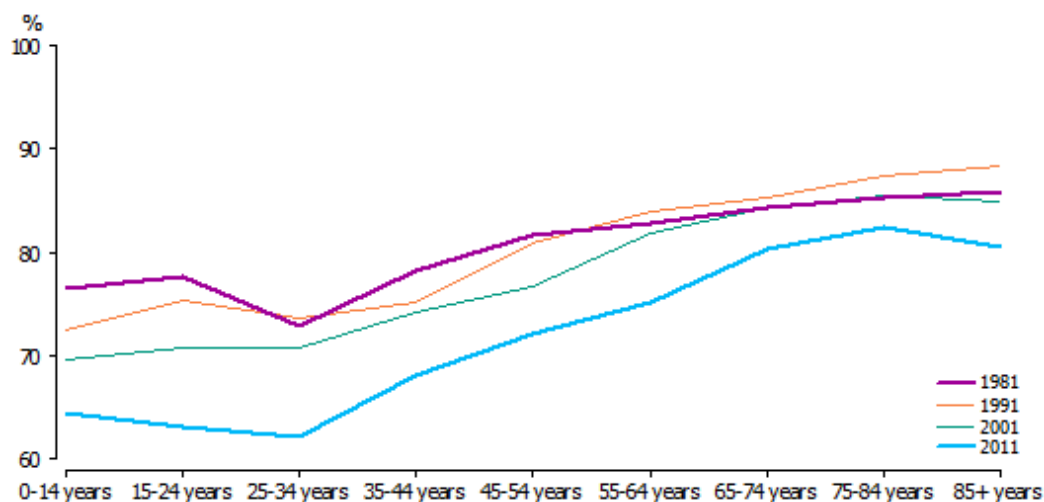
Excluded are 'No religion', 'atheism', 'agnosticism', 'rationalism', 'humanism'.

Non-response constitutes 8.7% of those aged 65 years and over, and 8.5% of younger people in 2011. The highest non-response for particular age groups is 12% for those aged 85 years and over. Census information on religion / spirituality is a response to the question 'What is the person's religion'. It is about identification or affiliation, not about regular practice. Answering this question is optional, therefore 'Not stated' is a valid response.

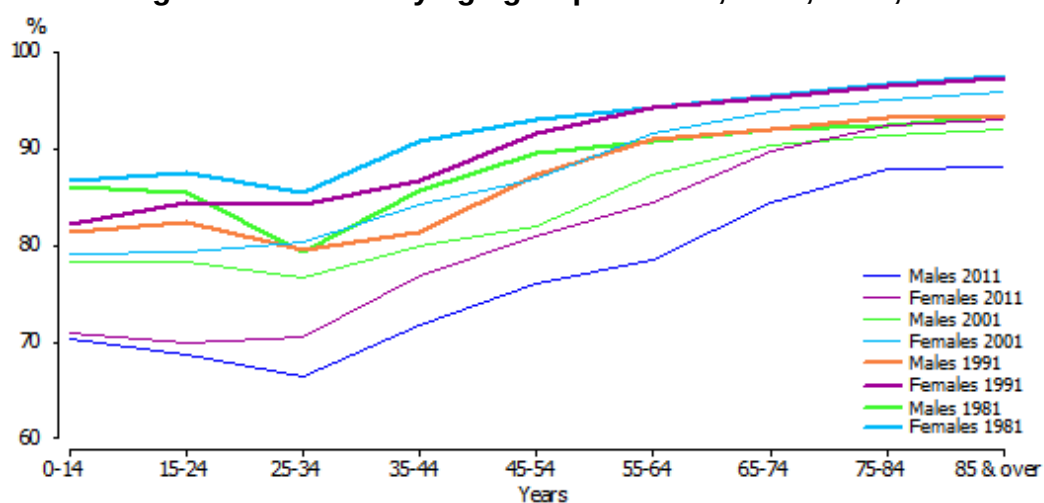
Examination of broad religious affiliation at ten-year intervals back to 1981 reveals a continuing decrease in the level of religious identification over time for most age groups, including children, and for the population as a whole. In the years shown, this is less so for older women, where the difference between the years has been much smaller, although increasing in 2011.

Is there an association between different stages in people's lives and their acceptance of a religious view? There is an echoing pattern across age groups in any particular census year. The proportion shown for children remains reasonably stable for the 15–24 year age group then falls for those aged 25–34 years, picks up for the immediately following age groups and continues to rise, though more slowly, into old age, levelling for the oldest age group. Introducing gender shows that women identify more strongly than men, and that the 25–34 age group fall in identification is usually on the part of men, who have a lower affiliation rate in all age groups after childhood.

### **Broad religious affiliation by age group, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011**



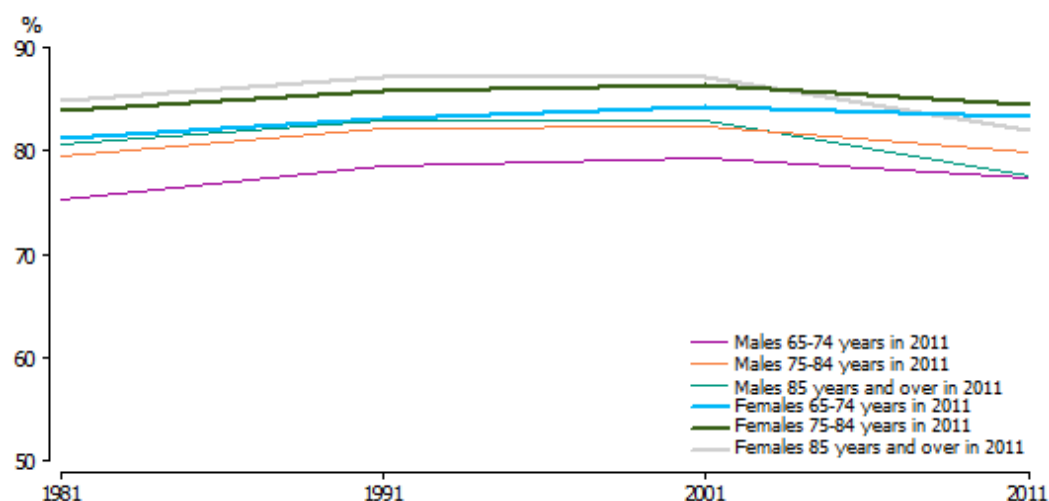
### Broad religious affiliation by age group and sex, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011



At face value, there seem to be gendered life cycle patterns within the society, with people turning to religion as they mature and grow older.

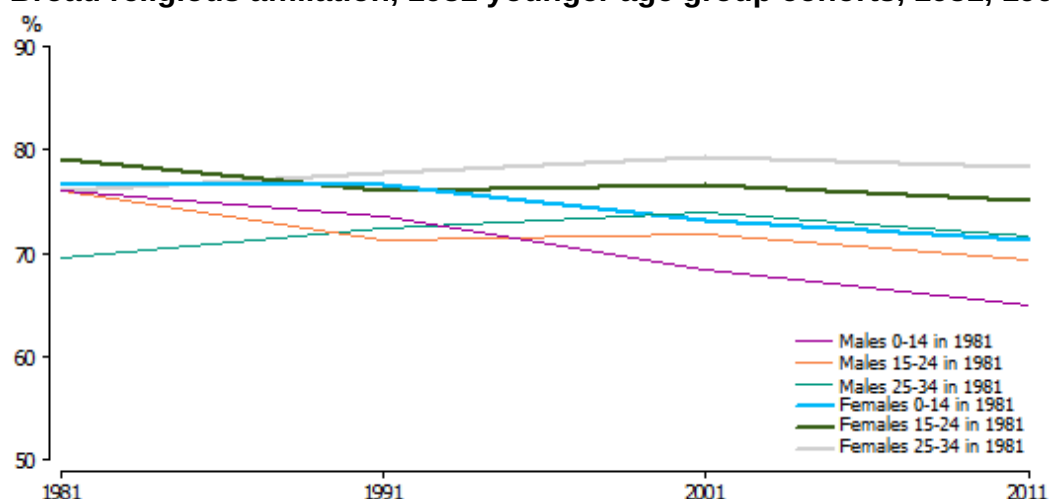
However, when each of the three older age groups in 2011 (65–74 years, 75–84 years and 85 years and over) are tracked back to 1981, the proportion of each cohort with a religious identification remains fairly constant over their ageing, with a levelling or decline (increased for those aged 85 years and over in 2011) at their present age relative to the proportion of their age/sex group thirty years previously. In 2011, the lower proportion of people in the oldest age group with a religious affiliation is more pronounced, perhaps because of a higher rate of 'Not stated' than for other age groups in this year.

### Broad religious affiliation, 2011 older age group cohorts, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011



To test the way this relates to the more volatile patterns for younger age groups, the three youngest age group cohorts from 1981 are carried forward to the relevant age in 2011: there is confirmation of the lower rate of affiliation at age 25–34, particularly for men but evident for women as well after 1981, as young people establish their independence; for the oldest of these groups in 1981 (those aged 25–34 years) as the group ages, the slight rise and then levelling or decline in religious affiliation can be seen as for the older cohorts; those aged 15–24 in 1981 barely rise from the low point, while for the youngest group the falling away from religious affiliation continues to their current age in 2011. Thus each age cohort begins at, and maintains, a progressively lower level of religious affiliation, while being higher for the women than for the men in each age cohort. A set of previous cohorts provides the rising pattern over age groups in the society in any one year. Religious affiliation, therefore, generally reflects change over time rather than over life cycle. Unless the 1981 younger age cohorts' tendencies change dramatically through their lifetime, a higher prevalence of religious affiliation in the 65 years and over age groups than among younger people could be expected to continue over the next three decades, beyond which it may change.

### Broad religious affiliation, 1981 younger age group cohorts, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011

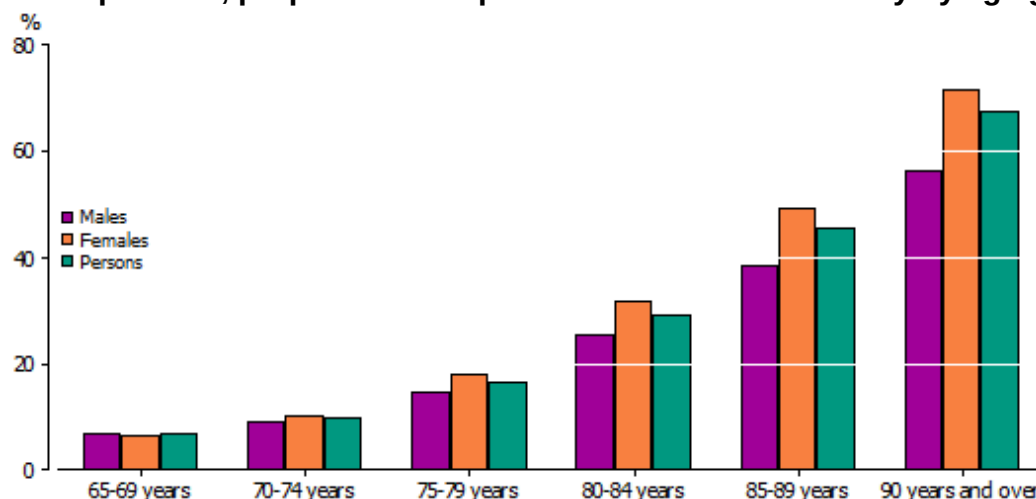


## PROFOUND OR SEVERE DISABILITY

A hazard of growing older is the increasing likelihood of disabilities which may shape the types of lives people can live and the activities they can do. The censuses conducted in 2006 and 2011 included a question on need for assistance or supervision with the most fundamental aspects of self-maintenance: physical mobility, self-care such as eating and personal hygiene, and being able to understand and make oneself understood by other people where there is a common language.

The measure this question produces is broadly equivalent to the concept of profound or severe disability used in the regular ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. People who have a profound or severe disability rely always or sometimes on assistance or supervision from others with the above activities. They may need to have a carer living with them, or community-based care available to them or ultimately non-private residential care.

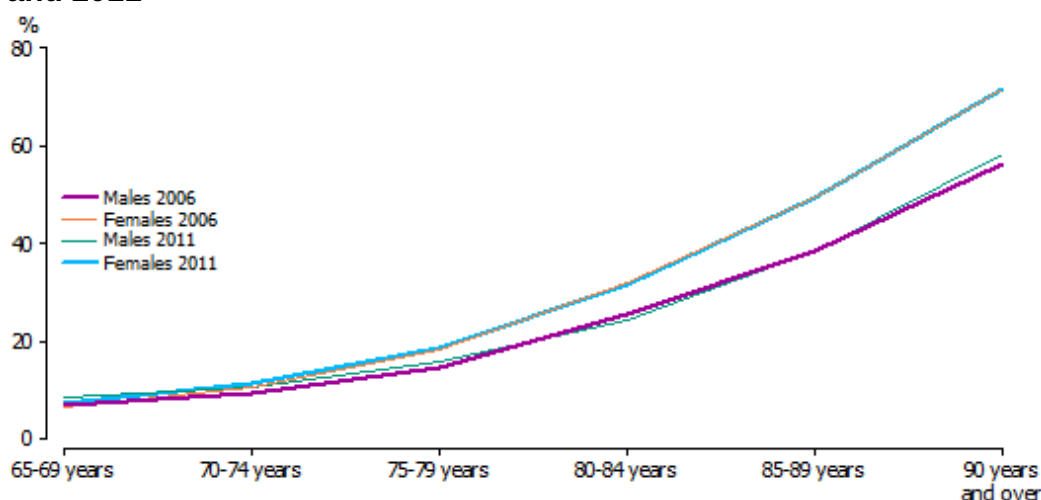
### Older persons, proportion with profound or severe disability by age group and sex, 2011



In 2011, 537,300 older people, 19%, were identified as having a profound or severe disability. Among people in the 65–69 and 70–74 age groups, less than one in ten and around one in ten people respectively reported a profound or severe disability. This increased to 17% for the 75–79 years age group, rising to 68% for the 90 years and over age group, 58% for men and 72% for women. Older women (22%) generally had a higher rate of profound or severe disability than older men (16%) .

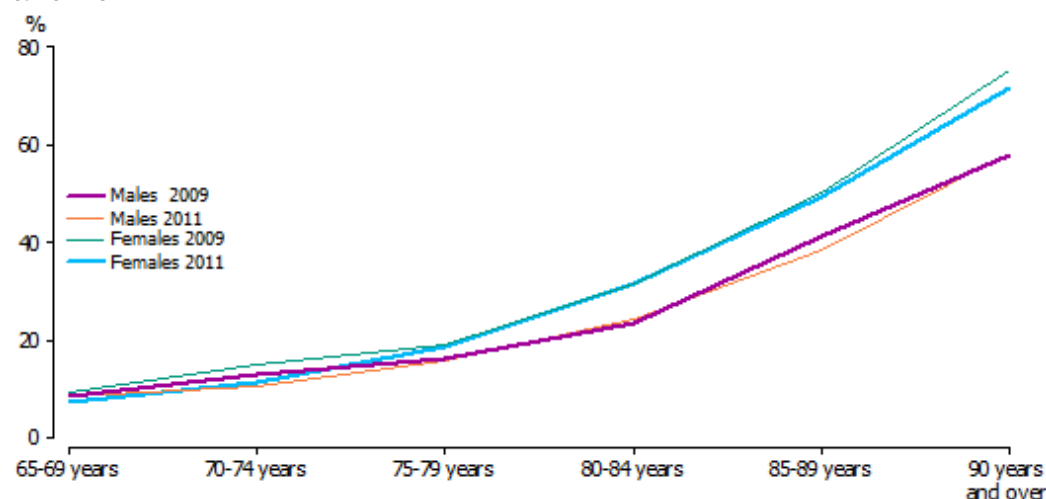
A much smaller set of questions was asked in the Censuses than in the regular survey to identify this condition. There was a high level of consistency by age and sex groups between the results of the two Censuses that have asked these questions, and a reasonable consistency between these Census results and those from the 2009 ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers. Profound or severe disability will be considered further in the sections on living arrangements, activities and geography.

### Older persons, proportion with profound or severe disability by age group and sex, 2006 and 2011



Source: ABS Census 2006, 2011.

## Older persons, proportion with profound or severe disability by age group and sex, 2009 and 2011



Source: ABS Census 2011; ABS Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2009.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

In 2011, the Australian government established the Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Older Australians. One of its tasks was to look at '... participation in its broadest perspective, to ask how Australia can best harness the life experience and intellectual capital of Senior Australians'. Their first report recommended encouraging continuing education and recognition of prior learning (Endnote 2). The 2011 Census provides an overview of the school and highest non-school formal qualifications achieved by older Australians, and the field of study for their highest non-school qualification.

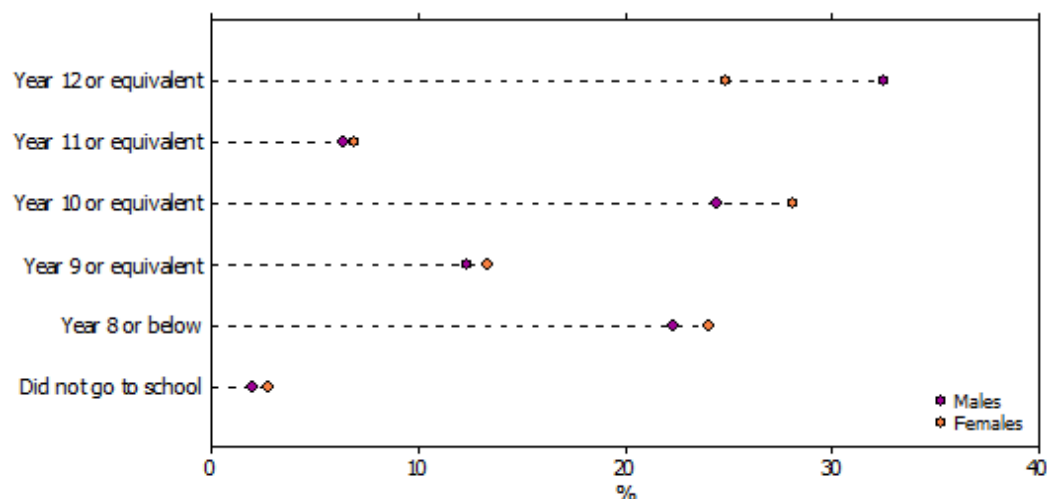
### School Completion

More than half (61%) of Australia's older people in 2011 had completed at least Year 10 or equivalent in schooling; just over a quarter (28%) had achieved Year 12 or equivalent. For both men and women, the proportion completing Year 10 or above was highest in the 65–74 year age group, 68% of men and 67.5% of women, and decreased with each higher age group. For those aged 85 years and over, 51% of men and 44% of women had completed Year 10 or higher. In 2011, older men (33%) were more likely than women (25%) to have completed Year 12 or equivalent, and women (28%) a little more likely than men (24%) to have left at the end of junior high school (Year 10 or equivalent).

There were some, however, who had never attended school, 2.4%, comprising 2.0% of older men and 2.7% of older women. The 75–84 and the 85 years and over age groups had a higher rate of never having gone to school, 2.6% each for men compared with 1.5% of the 65–74 years group, and 3.7% and 3.2% respectively for women in the older groups compared with 2.1% for the younger group. It was more common for people aged 85 years and over (36%) to have finished school before Year 9, while 28% of those aged 75–84 years and 18% of the 65–74 year olds were in that situation. In the 75-84 years group a similar proportion of women and men completed school before Year 9 (28% and 27% respectively). For those aged 85 years and over the difference was greater, with 38% of women completing school before Year 9 compared with 34% of men.

## Older persons, highest year of school completed by sex, 2011





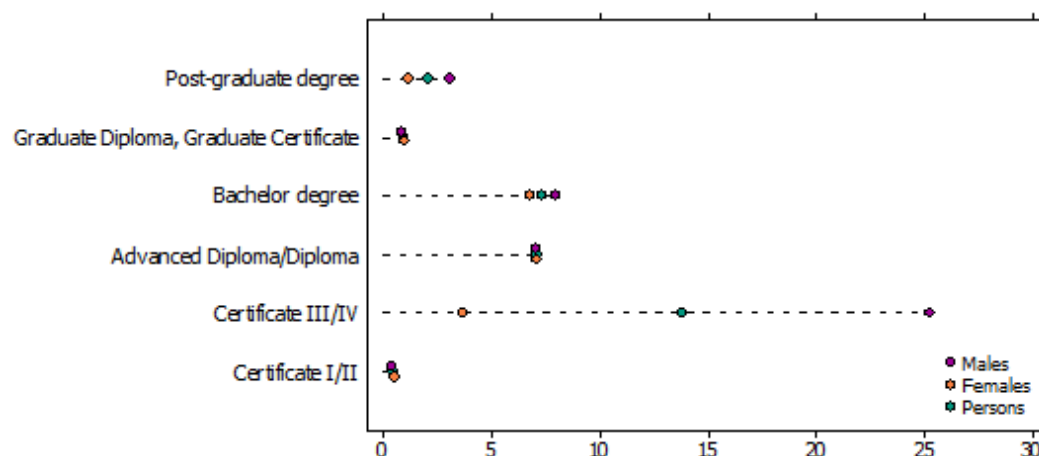
The highest year of school completion item had a high non-response rate in 2011, 15% for all older people, but rising to 25% for those aged 85 years and over. While the rate of non-response was much higher for people in hospitals and aged care institutions, boarding houses and gaols, most (79%) of the people with a 'Not stated' response were in private dwellings. Non-response has been excluded from the calculations above, but its size suggests a need for caution when using this information.

Much of the education of older Australians would have been completed before major changes to education systems; in particular there have been changes in the standard number of years of high school. This could affect the responses to the education questions on the Census form.

### Non-school Qualifications

Non-school qualifications were reported by a third (33%) of the older population in 2011, 46% of men and 22% of women, reflecting the lower level of importance placed on continuing education for women well into the 1960s. The non-school qualification most frequently reported by older people was at the Certificate III or IV level, held by 347,300 older people, 14% of the responding older population. This type of qualification, which includes skilled trades, was strongly associated with men. A quarter of the older male population (298,100) reported a Certificate at the III or IV level. Other qualifications were more evenly distributed between men and women, although much smaller proportions of the population were involved.

### Older persons, non-school qualifications by sex, 2011(a)



(a) Excludes older persons who responded that they had a non-school qualification, but did not supply the level.

### OLDER PERSONS, SELECTED NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS, 2011

		Males				Females				Persons			
		65-74 years	75-84 years	85 years and over	Total	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 years and over	Total	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 years and over	Total
Postgraduate Qualification(a)	'000	34.3	10.4	2.1	<b>46.8</b>	23.3	5.5	1.1	<b>29.9</b>	57.6	15.9	3.3	<b>76.7</b>
	%	4.8	2.9	2.0	<b>4.0</b>	3.2	1.3	0.6	<b>2.2</b>	4.0	2.0	1.1	<b>3.1</b>
Bachelor Degree	'000	62.9	24.3	7.0	<b>94.3</b>	60.6	23.1	6.6	<b>90.3</b>	123.6	47.4	13.7	<b>184.6</b>
	%	8.9	6.7	6.7	<b>8.0</b>	8.5	5.4	3.5	<b>6.8</b>	8.7	6.0	4.7	<b>7.3</b>
Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Associate Degree	'000	54.3	23.0	6.1	<b>83.4</b>	62.0	25.3	7.8	<b>95.1</b>	116.3	48.3	13.9	<b>178.6</b>
	%	7.7	6.3	5.8	<b>7.1</b>	8.6	5.9	4.2	<b>7.1</b>	8.2	6.1	4.7	<b>7.1</b>
Certificate III or IV	'000	186.2	88.8	23.1	<b>298.1</b>	30.7	13.7	4.8	<b>49.2</b>	216.8	102.5	28.0	<b>347.3</b>
	%	26.3	24.3	21.9	<b>25.3</b>	4.3	3.2	2.6	<b>3.7</b>	15.2	12.9	9.5	<b>13.8</b>
Certificate I or II	'000	3.3	1.2	0.3	<b>4.8</b>	5.0	1.5	0.5	<b>7.0</b>	8.3	2.7	0.8	<b>11.8</b>
	%	0.5	0.3	0.2	<b>0.4</b>	0.7	0.4	0.3	<b>0.5</b>	0.6	0.3	0.3	<b>0.5</b>
All Older Persons	'000	709.2	365.4	105.6	<b>180.2</b>	717.4	427.2	188.1	<b>332.8</b>	426.7	293.7	2	<b>513.0</b>

(a) Postgraduate qualifications include Postgraduate Degree, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate.

The percentage of people with a non-school qualification includes persons who stated they had completed any educational qualification and also stated the level of the highest qualification they had completed. When calculating this percentage, the total includes persons who did not have a non-school qualification and those who inadequately described the level of their educational qualification.

Attainment of Certificate III or IV qualifications increased from the 85 years and over age group to the 65–74 years (born 1937–1946) age groups, respectively for men and women. For the university courses, however, the experience of these three older age cohorts illustrate higher rates of growth in participation, though beginning from a lower base. This reflects the introduction of Commonwealth Scholarships in 1951. It is interesting that the participation rate in the Bachelor

Degree courses increases for both men and women to a similar level in the 65–74 age group. The gender proportions of university enrolments from the 1930s to the 1960s, the period when those who are in the older age groups today were young adults, would not appear to support this rapid growth in participation for women (Endnote 9). It suggests that many women may have been encouraged to take up university study at later stages of their lives by a series of changes in their situation. There was the introduction of free university education during the 1970s, followed in the 1980s by the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS). The Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Scheme introduced in 1980s assisted with child care to increase eligible parents' entry into education, the labour market and economic independence. Other influencing factors such as the more efficient control of fertility, no fault divorce, the changing ideas about women's roles coming through the Women's Liberation movement and the growing importance of continuing learning for jobs may have encouraged such new directions in life.

The highest non-school qualifications achieved by older people cover a very wide range of fields. However, there were intensive concentrations in a much smaller set of fields, markedly different between men and women. Out of four hundred fields of study identified by respondents, the twenty most common fields listed in the table below accounted for more than half of those reporting. A number of study fields are not reported at all, although some may have been studied at a lower level of qualification in an older person's life course.

The leading fields of study indicate the importance of training in their youth for a job expected to be their life's work for many of the men and for some of the women who are now our elders. They are also quite strongly gendered. For older men, the top fields of study clearly reflect the dominance of their trade requirements, leading to jobs in the manufacturing, construction and vehicle servicing industries. Nursing and teaching in particular, but also secretarial and clerical studies, hairdressing, garment-making and librarianship, offered some young women a suitable pathway out of the household with skills that would stand by them against life's crises. Accountancy, and Business and Management, were fields of study which were rather more evenly shared.

There are fields of study identified by very few or no older people which illustrate some of the scientific, technical, political and social changes since they were in their primary studying years. A sample includes Computer Graphics, Security Science, Building Services Engineering, Operating Systems, Conceptual Modelling, Ocean Engineering, Personal Management Training, Decision Support Systems, Database Management and Artificial Intelligence. This is a reminder that for many older people the world they inhabit may be becoming more unfamiliar and confusing, undermining their personal sense of efficacy.

### OLDER PERSONS, MOST COMMON FIELDS OF STUDY FOR HIGHEST NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS, 2011

<b>Males</b>			<b>Females</b>		<b>Persons</b>	
Field of study	Number		Field of study	Number	Field of study	Number
1 Engineering and related technologies nfd	43 370		General nursing	62 191	General nursing	64 233
2 Accounting	25 683		Secretarial and Clerical Studies	39 392	Teacher Education, nfd	45 239
3 Carpentry and Joinery	24 156		Teacher Education, nfd	30 863	Engineering and related technologies nfd	45 046
4 Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Technology nfd	23 030		Teacher Education, Primary	23 007	Secretarial and Clerical Studies	40 288
5 Metal fitting, Turning and Machining	22 821		Hairdressing	15 399	Accounting	36 849
6 Vehicle Mechanics	16 843		Garment making	11 844	Teacher Education, Primary	29 066
7 Building, nfd	14 651		Accounting	11 166	Carpentry and Joinery	24 244

8	Teacher education, nfd	14 376	Teacher education, Secondary	7 846	Metal fitting, Turning and Machining	23 312
9	Plumbing	13 914	Business and management, nfd	7 619	Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Technology nfd	23 194
10	Boilermaking and Welding	13 300	Midwifery	7 556	Hairdressing	18 308
11	Electrical Fitting, Electrical Mechanics	10 307	Teacher education, nec	4 605	Business and management, nfd	17 731
12	Business and Management, nfd	10 112	Teacher education, early childhood	4 558	Vehicle Mechanics	16 886
13	Printing	10 046	Librarianship and information management	4 316	Building, nfd	14 808
14	Mechanical Engineering	8 469	History	3 748	Plumbing	13 952
15	Painting, Decorating and Sign Writing	7 635	Education, nfd	3 721	Boilermaking and Welding	13 369
16	Law, nfd	7 164	Management and Commerce, nfd	3 266	Teacher education, Secondary	13 183
17	Agricultural science	7 053	Psychology	3 241	Garment making	13 122
18	General medicine	6 784	Literature	2 972	Printing	10 535
19	Electrical Engineering	6 305	Music	2 933	Electrical Fitting, Electrical Mechanics	10 384
20	Butchery	6 229	Society and Culture, nfd	2 727	General medicine	8 809

nfd: not further defined; nec: not elsewhere classified.

## More information on Australia's older people

Further information will be available about the living arrangements and activities of older people in a future edition of this publication.

## ENDNOTES

1. Australian Human Rights Commission 2012, 'From Grey to Gold - Discussing Age Discrimination', speech to the Comcare National Conference 2012 by the Hon. Susan Ryan AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner, 20 September 2012, <<http://humanrights.gov.au/>>. Dr Barnett, K., Parnis, E. and Assoc Prof Spoehr, J. 2009, 'Experience Works: The Mature Age Employment Challenge', Discussion Paper for National Seniors Australia by Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre, The University of Adelaide, June 2009, <<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/wiser/>>.

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2. The Treasury 2011, 'Realising the Economic Potential of Senior Australians: Enabling Opportunity', by the Advisory Panel on the Economic Potential of Senior Australians, Second Report, 2 November 2011, <<http://www.treasury.gov.au/>>.

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3. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2008, Australian Historical Population Statistics, 2008, cat. no. 3105.0.65.001, ABS, Canberra. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2012, Australian Demographic Statistics, March 2012, cat. no. 3101.0, ABS, Canberra.

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4. NSW Migration Heritage Centre, 'Migrants between 1918 and 1939', in Australian Migration History Timeline, viewed 10 October 2012, <<http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/>>.

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5. Productivity Commission 2011, 'Caring for Older Australians', Final Inquiry Report, vol. 1, ch. 11, 8 August 2011, <<http://www.pc.gov.au/>>.

6. The birth rate among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in 2011 was estimated to be 2.74 babies per woman, compared with 1.88 babies per woman for all women in Australia. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Births and Fertility, Births, Australia, 2011, cat. no. 3301.0, ABS, Canberra.

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7. Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2009, 'Annual Report 2008-09', DIAC, Canberra, <<http://immi.gov.au/>>.

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8. 'Anglican' was the dominant religious identification in Australia for most of the twentieth century, until 'Catholic' became the leading affiliation in the 1986 Census. Since then, 'Catholic' has been the leading religious affiliation overall, but 'Anglican' has remained more predominant amongst older Australians. In the 2011 Census, amongst the overseas-born who were Christian, Catholics were more numerous than Anglicans, and this was so from every region of the world except North-West Europe. Similarly, compared with all other Christian groups excluding Anglicans combined, there was a greater number of Catholics from all regions of the world other than North-West Europe and North-East Asia.

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9. Booth, A. and Hiau, J.K. 2009, 'The University Gender Gap in Australia: A Long-run Perspective', Paper for the Australian Economic History in the Long Run Conference, Australian National University, 26-27 March 2009, <<http://www.anu.edu.au/>>.

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